Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz

"Empress of Brazil"

by Victor Villon

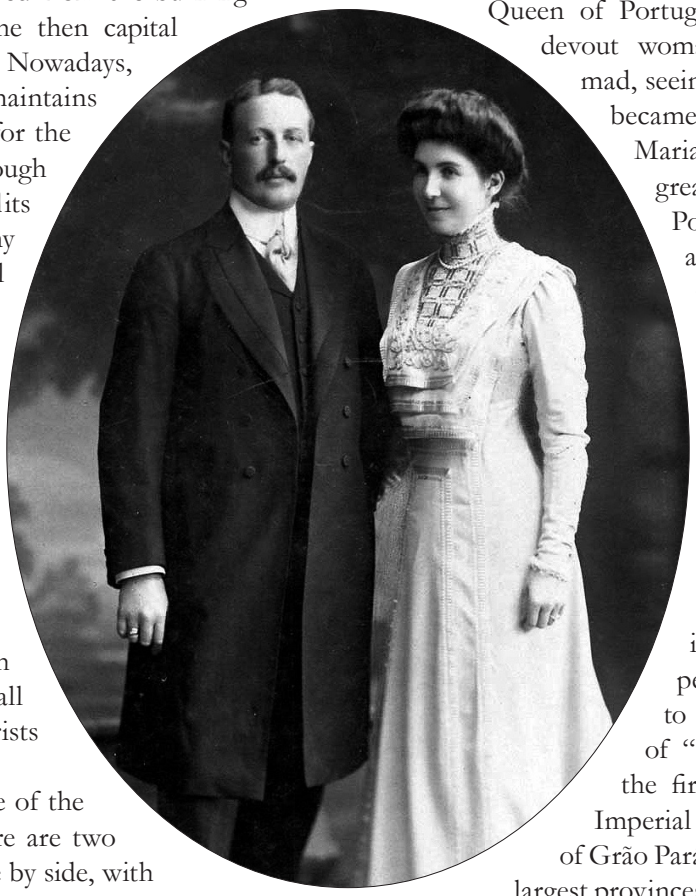
The Secret of the Stained Glass Window

Petropolis is a pleasant town with a mild climate, situated in the mountain ranges close to the city of Rio de Janeiro. It was there that the Emperor, Dom Pedro II (1825-1891), escaped from the burning heat of the summer of the then capital of the Brazilian Empire. Nowadays, Petropolis valiantly still maintains its placid charm, so good for the tranquility of the soul, although modern times have obscured its past glories. Every day many tourists enter the Cathedral of Sao Pedro d'Alcantara, where a small and simple mausoleum contains the mortal remains of Dom Pedro II and the principal members of the imperial family. However, there is one small detail, in one of the beautiful stained glass windows that decorate the church, which goes unnoticed by almost all of the visitors, whether tourists or residents of the town.

In the lower part of one of the stained glass windows there are two coats of arms together, side by side, with the imperial crown above. They are the coat of arms of the Brazilian imperial family on the one side and, on the other side, of Count Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. The detail may be of little importance, but behind it there lies a love story, a dynastic dispute, and the effects of the vicissitudes of fortune. The two coats of arms symbolize the matrimonial union between Dom Pedro d'Alcantara, Prince of Grão Pará, and Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz.

The Prince of Grão Pará and his exile

The Prince of Grão Pará was born on 15 October 1875, in Petropolis. He was the son of Isabel Princess Imperial of Brazil (1846-1921), heir to the throne of the tropical monarchy. None of the male heirs of Emperor Dom Pedro II had survived: Dom Afonso, born in 1845, died at the age of two, Dom Pedro, bom in 1848, died at the age of one. There were only two girls to continue the Bragança line in Brazil, Isabel and Leopoldina (1847-1871), and the House of Bragança was not so happy with the prospect of female heirs. This was in contrast to England, which always had great female sovereigns. Initially, there had been Dona Maria I (1734-1816), the Queen of Portugal. She was an extremely devout woman, who eventually went mad, seeing demons everywhere. She became known, in Brazil, as Dona Maria "the Mad". Princess Isabel, great-great grandchild of the Portuguese sovereign, was as pious as her predecessor, although she did not go mad, and became neither empress nor queen.



However, before our explanation is continued, the significance of the title "Prince of Grão Pará" must be considered. According to the 1824 constitution[1], which was in force during the entire period of the empire, the heir to the emperor had the title of "Prince Imperial". In turn, the first-born son of the Prince Imperial received the title of "Prince of Grão Pará". Grão Pará was one of the largest provinces in Brazil. It occupied what now includes the states of Pará, Amazonas, Amapá and Roraima. As a tribute to this distant province, the title of the Prince was accordingly named after "Grão Pará". It is probable that this choice was influenced by the anxiety of the political elite at that time. Brazil had just gained its independence and it was necessary, at whatever cost, to develop a national identity. The relationship with a grandiose and even a paradisal nature was one of the preferred elements for this generation of "founders of the empire", in their attempt to create symbols of identity. It was through the vast expanses of the Province of Grão Pará that the abundant waters of the Amazon River ran, and also where the immense greenery of the Amazonian forest flourished.

Princess Isabel married, on 15 October 1864, the French Prince Gaston d'Orléans, Count d'Eu (1842-1922), grandson of Louis-Philippe (1773-1850), King of the French. Isabel and Gaston found it difficult to

Countess Elizabeth von Dobrzensky de Dobrezenicz and Prince Pedro de Alcântara of Orleans and Bragance,in their engagement's official picture(1908).

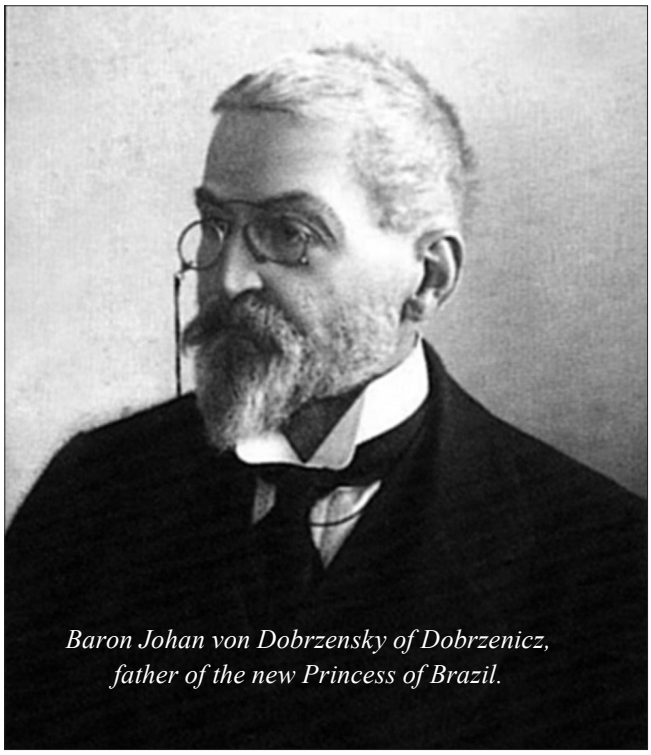
Chotebor Castle in Czechoslovakia: ancestral home of the Dobrezensky of Dobreznicz family.

have children, which was much more than just a family matter because it was also a matter of State. The imperial succession depended on it. The apparent infertility of the Princess Imperial concerned everybody. It was only in 1874 that Isabel gave birth to a girl, who was stillborn. However, the next year, Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was born. The pregnancy had been carefully monitored and it was a very difficult delivery. To everybody's distress, Dr. Depaul, the French doctor who had been called especially for the occasion, sprained the child's arm. This accident had important consequences; Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was left with an atrophied arm for the rest of his life. In total, there were three children that lived to adulthood.

The American historian, Roderick Barman, made an acute and very interesting analysis of the childhood of Dom Pedro d'Alcântara. It is worthwhile quoting from this source, because the way in which he was seen by his parents may have influenced, subsequently, the conditions that were imposed in order for him to marry Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky. We will look into this question later. Meanwhile, let us turn our attention to the upbringing of the Prince of Grão Pará:

At the time when the family was living on the outskirts of Versailles, their eldest son, Pedro, was fifteen years old. Luis was two years younger, and Antonio or "Toto", as he was nicknamed, was nine. The three boys were very different in character. Pedro was kind and friendly but did not like to study and appeared clumsy. Luis had great strength of will and was very active and discerning. In March 1890, his father commented: "Baby Pedro is always lazy and foolish", whereas "Luis does exactly the same schoolwork on his own, with admirable prestige and capacity". It is probable that the ease with which Luis surpassed his older brother, and the critical attitude of his parents, made Pedro less disposed to compete, especially as he was hindered by the injury to his arm and left hand.

On 15 November 1889, the Republic of Brazil was proclaimed, and the entire imperial family was obliged to go into exile. First, they went to Portugal for a short period of time, and then to France, where they remained.



Baron Johan von Dobrzensky of Dobrzenicz, father of the new Princess of Brazil.

Elizabeth and Pedro de Alcântara with their two first children: Pedro Gastão and Isabele (1913).

The imperial couple and their children in 1921: João, Maria, Isabele, Tereza, Pedro Gastão and Francisca.

It is well-known that the old-fashioned education for a prince was military training. When Dom Pedro d'Alcântara reached the age to serve in the army, it was no different for him. However, there was a problem for the Brazilian prince to enter a military academy. The law of exile prevented the imperial family from stepping on Brazilian soil or serving in the Brazilian army. With respect to France, the republic did not allow the descendents of French monarchs to enter into a military career, afraid of what they might do to the established regime. It should not be forgotten that Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was an actual Orléans, by male lineage, great-grandson of Louis-Philippe, the last wearer of the French crown. However, in Europe, there still was a great empire with an old monarch, a Catholic and guardian of the most genuine royal traditions. This was the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the emperor was, obviously, Franz-Joseph I (1830-1916). Furthermore, the Austrian emperor was a close relation. Dom Pedro II – the grandfather of the young Brazilian prince – was the son of Dona Leopoldina (1797-1826), the cultured and intelligent Archduchess of Austria, who had been sent to distant Brazil. Consequently, the deceased Brazilian monarch was the first cousin of the Emperor of Austria, and Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was allowed to study at the Wiener Neustadt military academy.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire at the dawn of the last century was a melting pot of different people and cultural excitement, a curious blend of avant-garde spirit with profound conservatism. One has only to mention that in the age of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), and Franz Kafka (1883-1924), the Emperor Franz-Joseph was still demonstrating the arbitrariness of absolute monarchy. This was not only limited to the political environment but also extended to his own family: he prohibited the wedding of Leopold-Ferdinand (1868-1935) with the Infanta Dona Elvira (1871-1929), threw his youngest brother, Ludwig-Viktor (1842-1919), out of the Court, and pronounced the marriage of his nephew and heir, Franz-Ferdinand (1863-1914) morganatic, even though the bride, Sophie Chotek von Chotkowa und Wognin (1868-1914), belonged to a noble family from Bohemia, dating back to the fifteenth century. Even if Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was not directly influenced by the varied and dynamic cultural and social background of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – a theory that I find somewhat difficult to believe – it is indisputable that his stay in this dual monarchy not only affected his private life but also the history of the exiled Brazilian dynasty. As his son and heir, Dom Pedro Gastão (1913-2007), remembered much later, there was a purpose in this period of his father's life: "Moving from garrison to garrison across the immense Austro-Hungarian Empire, he came across different people, customs and languages. He served a magnificent apprenticeship in the most important Empire of the time."[2]

Princess Elizabeth of Brazil and three of her children:

Princess Elizabeth of Brazil and her daughters: Tereza, Isabele and Francisca de Orleans e Bragança.

At the military academy, Dom Pedro d'Alcantara became friends with four brothers, the sons of Johann-Wenzel Baron Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz (1841-1919). When he was on leave from his military obligations he was unable to go home because France was so far from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He accepted an invitation from the brothers to spend time at the Dobrzensky family castle, in the Bohemia region. This was a beautiful property, situated in Chotebor, approximately 300 km from the Wiener Neustadt military academy. It was during these visits to Chotebor that Dom Pedro d'Alcântara fell in love with the daughter of Baron Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. Her name was Maria Elisabeth Adelhaid, and she was born in the same castle on 7 December 1875. In April 2003 the Countess of Paris, daughter of Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky, granted me an interview, by letter, and described her mother's education, as follows:

Princess Elisabeth spoke and wrote five languages: Czech, English, German, French and Portuguese. She was also an excellent portrait painter. She studied at Chotebor, with several teachers that lived in the castle. She also sometimes took advantage of her brothers' teachers, which was of great benefit. She later entered the Academy of Music and Painting, in Munich.[3, 4]

The meeting of Dom Pedro d'Alcântara with the young and beautiful Elisabeth Dobrzensky certainly aroused an intense and powerful love, which was reciprocated. The engagement lasted eight long years because the Count and Countess d'Eu tried everything to stop the marriage. Their motive was the difference in standing between the engaged couple. Nowadays, when hereditary princes freely marry commoners, the impediment presented by the Count and Countess d'Eu appears strange and without foundation. Even more so, because we know that the Dobrzensky family were in no respect commoners. To everyone's surprise, the Count d'Eu had a common background with his future daughter-in-law, through the bloodline of Kohary which he inherited from his maternal grandmother. Their common ancestors were: Christof-Leopod Count von Thurheim (1629-1689), Franz Count von Trautsmandorff (1677-1753), and Maria Countess von Kaunitz (1682-1735).[5] Dom Pedro Gastão summarized the problematic marriage of his parents, as follows: *He married at the age of thirty-one, without the approval of the Count d'Eu. My grandfather believed that a prince should only marry royalty and he did not like the idea that my father married for love, and with a mere countess from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.*[6]

From distant Bohemia to the "Empire" of Brazil; how did it happen?

The first record of the Dobrzensky name dates back to 1339, when Zdenko and Bohunko von Dobrzenic are mentioned as lords of the village of Dobřenice, in the

Princess Elisabeth with her daughter Isabele, son-in-law the Count of Paris, and their two eldest children.

eastern region of Bohemia, which is nowadays located in the district of Hradec Králové. Not only is the Dobrzensky patronymic linked to the village of Dobřenice – the place where the family surname originated – but also to the coat of arms of this location. To the present day, the stork still appears on the coat of arms of Dobřenice, as it does on that of the Counts Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. The legend states that a young member of the Dobrzensky family was taken prisoner by the Turks and sold as a slave. One day, there was a flight of storks passing overhead. He immediately recalled that on his family's property there had been one of these birds, named Šotku. This stork was very tame and when any one called it, it obeyed and came to meet the person. On an impulse, and without any explanation, Dobrzenky decided to shout out Šotku's name. To his surprise, one of the storks turned into his direction. After such a long time in captivity the presence of the stork, so familiar to him, brought great joy. The young Dobrzensky had a great idea. It was an opportunity to gain his longed-for freedom. He took a piece of bark from a tree and wrote down his name and where he was. He then tied this plea for help to the neck of the stork. The family believed that the young Dobrzensky was already dead. When his father saw what Šotku carried around his neck, he ordered that the servants quickly take some money to free his son from slavery. Henceforth, as a thank you to the redeeming bird, the Dobrzensky family placed the faithful stork on its coat of arms, for all to see.

The Dobrzensky family was recognized in the category of ancient Lords of Bohemia (*Böhmischer alter Herrenstand*), in a document dated 18 June 1696. On 21 February 1744, the title of 'Baron' was granted to the brothers Wenzel Peter, Franz Karl and Johann Joseph Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. Johann Joseph Dobrzensky, the great-great grandfather of Countess Elisabeth, assumed the head of the baronial house after the death of his brother, Wenzel Peter, in 1783. In 1906, the father of Elisabeth Dobrzensky rose to the title of 'Count' and, in 1912, he became a Hereditary Member of the House of Lords of Austria. However, previously, Anna Elisabeth Baroness Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz (1852-1913), from a collateral branch of the family, was honored with the title of 'Countess', in 1879, on her engagement to Prince Friedrich Wilhelm zu Ysenburg und Büdingen (1850-1933).

The tragic solution found by the Count and Countess d'Eu for their dilemma over Dom Pedro's proposed marriage was to oblige their first born son, the holder of the inalienable rights to the succession of the Imperial House of Brazil, to renounce. This bypassed all constitutional and judicial legitimacy. Dom Luis, their second son, had been considered from childhood as a more lively and intelligent child than his older brother, as we have seen above. Dom Luis was engaged to somebody who corresponded perfectly with the demands of his parents, namely Dona Maria Pia, Princess of the Two Sicilies. With respect to the prince's character, Barman declares:

[...] Luis, Pedro's younger brother, was an activist; he "was ambitious and headstrong, and saw the world as something to be conquered. He was an alpine climber and scaled Mont Blanc in 1896. He visited South Africa, and followed this with a long and daring excursion to Central Asia and India. He wrote and published a book about these three experiences. It was their second son, not Pedro, that D. Isabel and the Count of Eu considered to be the person most capable of maintaining the cause of monarchy in Brazil.[7]

The destiny of each of their sons had already been decided by the Count and Countess d'Eu, as can be seen from the following succession of dates: on 30 October 1908, Dom Pedro d'Alcântara wrote a letter of "renunciation", that had no legal standing, and paid no respect to the traditions of the House of Bragança, due merely to the fateful whim of Princess Isabel; on 4 November, Dom Luis married the Princess of the Two Sicilies; and finally, after years of waiting; on 14 November, in Versailles, Dom Pedro d'Alcântara was able to marry Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. Princess Isabel explained the cause of the supposed "renunciation" of her eldest son to Teresa da Baviera, as follows:

I also want to tell you about the wedding of our son Pedro. For over five years he has sought this marriage with the Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky, from an excellent noble and historic family. However,

because they are not a **royal family** *we delayed our consent until Luis got married, and now we believe we must acquiesce.*[8] [Our emphasis]

The "renunciation" was controversial. The imperial family was not a government in exile, which could be recognized officially. There was a Monarchial Directorate, without any of the required formalities, chosen as the preferred interlocutor in Brazil, with respect to political questions and a possible restoration. Eminent figures from the recently overthrown empire formed part of this group, such as: Viscount of Ouro Preto (1837-1912), Lafayette Rodrigues Pereira (1834-1917), João Alfredo Correa de Oliveira (1835-1919), and Domingos de Andrade Figueira (1833-1910). When the news of the "renunciation" arrived in Brazil, the Andrade Figueira did not want to accept it. Princess Isabel did not even seek the advice of the members of the Monarchial Directorate. Correa de Oliveira, despite subserviently respecting the decisions and the facts, made his sincere opinion quite clear:

If, instead of the fact, I had to consider the plan, I would ask the permission of Your Imperial Majesty to insist on my opinion to reserve any intention of renunciation until the time of the restoration. If its imminence was so certain that it could not fail, everything should then be considered that could be of influence in such a serious action. He continued: Frankly, I have never understood how a change in the order of the succession could facilitate the re-establishment of the monarchy, or how, in this respect, there would be considerable acceptance or useful work....[9]

It is said that Dom Pedro d'Alcântara never regretted his "renunciation". However, this is only partly true: in an interview in 1937, he indicated that he was fully aware of the invalidity of the document:

When I renounced the imperial throne many years ago . . . in favor of my brother, Prince D Luiz, it was only done from a personal standpoint. It did not meet the requirements of Brazilian Law, there was no prior consultation with the nation, there was none of the necessary protocol that is required for acts of this nature and, furthermore, it was not a hereditary renunciation. When I later spoke with monarchists in Europe and during my visits to Brazil, I confirmed that my renunciation was invalid for several reasons, as well as those that I have just mentioned. Councilor João Alfredo, who retained an original copy of the renunciation, was also of the same opinion.[10]

On 3 September 1920, the President of Brazil, Epitacio Pessoa, ended the law of exile that prevented the imperial family from entering Brazil. In 1922, Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky visited Brazil for the first time. The Countess of Paris explained that her mother, even when she was still onboard the ship, was very surprised to see the city of Salvador from a distance. This was because she had always dreamed of that mysterious landscape that was now revealed to her, ever since her childhood in the confines of Bohemia. After this, as if destiny had been accomplished, Elisabeth Dobrzensky never again dreamed of such a landscape.

Princess Elisabeth towards the end of her life.

Dom Pedro d'Alcantara died in Petropolis, in the Palace of Grão Pará, on 29 January 1940. The boy, who was born as heir to the Emperor of Brazil, passed away at a time when the old summer palace of his grandparents was becoming the Imperial Museum and Brazil was under the dictatorship of Getulio Vargas.

Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz died in Cintra, Portugal, on 11 June 1951. The Countess of Paris described the personality and the last days of her mother, as follows: [...] *she was active, spontaneous, sometimes impertinent, and always courageous in adversity and in pain. Stricken with cancer, she spent the last six months of her life suffering terribly, but never complained. From time to time, she would simply settle in her chair, without saying a word. She only was only bed-ridden eight days before she died. [...] Deep down, she was very happy to be leaving and to be meeting my father again in paradise. It was her dream [...], because they were such a united couple. Since the death of our father, she brought happiness and kindness into our lives, but the cancer was painful. I had the impression that life without my father did not interest her any more. Her illness was almost liberating.*[11]

A simple letter of the period

In the archives of the Palace of Grão Pará, in Petropolis, there are several letters in French, written by the Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz. These were sent to Princess Isabel, her mother-in-law - who she calls

"mother", a term of address used in private, according to family customs. The correspondence began shortly after the marriage, one of the first letters being dated 3 February 1909. Elisabeth's handwriting was not very steady and contained elaborate patterns, although divested of most of the symmetrical rigidity of the calligraphy of the period. One could say it was almost a disorganized style of writing, contrary to that of Countess Kottulinsky, her mother, who had a firm hand with straight strokes. The letters discussed day to day matters and always seemed to have a tranquil background, as befitting any élite family at the beginning of the twentieth century. I believe this part of the active correspondence of Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky had more to do with the silence of the conventions of the era and her social standing, rather than the tacit tensions within any family, especially when we consider the context in which the noble lady from Bohemia entered the heart of the imperial family of Brazil. The environment that is suggested, little by little, is a simultaneous mixture of bourgeoisie and nobility. It was bourgeois due to the serenity of a daily life filled with pleasingly trivial activities. Here are a few examples, taken from several letters: '*My dearest mother and father, thank you a thousand times for the thoughtful Easter egg, which gave me so much pleasure*'[12]; '*But what was most beautiful was the sunrise and the quality of these morning hours. I would then sleep until midday. Everyday, after lunch, I keep meaning to paint; there are so many admirable subjects. Instead of this, they make me play bridge until night-time*'[13]; '*I see that mother does not stop in her charity work. I hope this is not very tiring* '[14]; '*I am painting Louise's small daughter. I want to paint landscapes but I am much too lazy here.*'[15]; '*We are continuing our embroidery work – and mother's chickens laid 8 eggs today. However, they are very disorderly and they lay them everywhere.*'[16]

On the other hand, the trademarks of belonging to the nobility are clear; in the social gatherings and the constant hunting, an activity, *par excellence*, of the aristocracy. These are reflections of a world where the symbolic differences between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, penetrated the *modus vivendi* of both groups. However, the conscience and the limits of each order continued as before. The distinct and almost absolute hierarchy of the old regime had been dismantled for a long time, but its echoes were perfectly audible. For example: '*We are still in Krasne, our departure from here was delayed because the Princess of Radziwill, who we had intended to go and see in Lithuania, asked us to put off our visit for a while, because she is not yet ready to receive us.*'[17]; '*. . . we had an enchanting stay in Copenhagen. Ever since the first day, Aage, the eldest son of prince Waldemar, has kept us entertained.*'[18] '*Afterwards we took tea, at the house of Count Thursa, attached to the Austrian embassy, who we met along with his wife.*'[19] One of the letters perfectly displays this spirit of nobility, and is reproduced in its entirety:

My dear mother:
Thank you a thousand times for the card and the letter that you sent here. Pedro wrote yesterday to father about what we had been doing since Copenhagen, where I sent a letter to mother on the day of our departure. We are thinking of staying a few more days here, because we have been invited by several people in the neighborhood to go hunting and for dinner. Everybody is very kind and friendly. There was a grand dinner here last night. It was attended by the Count and Countess Westphalen, who are Austrian. We met them in Austria and they live nearby. On Sunday, we are going to their castle to attend mass and to dine. Afterwards there is, Count Platen with his family, Count Haka[20], and Count Hardenberg, who are all neighbors here. Finally, there is the mayor, who is known here as Landreth, with his wife. The region is very beautiful - we have made some delightful trips to Lake Selent and to the seaside. The weather is good and hot and the trees are still green. Later today, we are hoping to shoot some deer. I hope that you are both well, my dear mother, and my dear father, and that the weather in Eu is as good as it is here. Pedro and I kiss your hands and the hands of our dear father. An affectionate embrace for my dear mother from her grateful daughter, Elsi

Elizabeth, with her husband, Pedro de Alcântara, and their son and heir, Pedro Gastão.

The resting place in the imperial mausoleum

Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz would indirectly place her mark forever in the history of the Brazilian Imperial Family. Claiming a false legality in the renunciation letter of Dom Pedro d'Alcântara, the descendants of his brother, Dom Luis, claimed the rights over the inheritance of the Emperors of Brazil, which raised a dynastic dispute and consequently a division of Orléans e Bragança into two branches. The descendents of Dom Pedro d'Alcantara became known as the "Petropolis Branch" and the descendants of Dom Luis became known as the "Vassouras Branch". This last branch, supported by an ultra-reactionary political movement, gained the antipathy of a large part of public opinion, in the 1993 referendum. The branch continues, even today, obstinately persisting in the ideals of a divine right monarchy. The fundamental claims of the Vassouras Branch are even more fallacious and contradictory, when it is known that the succession rests

with a mésalliance with a princess de Ligne. As is well-known, this family, originating from the Belgian region of Hainaut, was never considered royal. Suffice it to say that in the *Almanach de Gotha*, the Ligne family does not appear in the first section, designated for sovereign houses, or in the second section, for mediatized houses but only in the third section.

However much the family belongs to the high nobility, it cannot be considered a '**royal family**'. This was the condition that was imposed by Princess Isabel for the marriages of the heirs to the Imperial House of Brazil, according to the abovementioned passage from one of her own letters.

On the other hand, from his Palace of Grão Pará, in Petropolis, Dom Pedro Gastão managed to reign during the second half of the twentieth century in a republic. He symbolized, as no-one before, the synthesis between modernity, democracy and monarchy. The great Spanish historian of royal families, Juan Balansó, rightly commented: '... I am convinced that Dom Pedro [Gastâo] could have become a great constitutional emperor, as were Pedro I and Pedro II . . .'[21]

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the dynastic legitimacy of Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky is the distinction occupied by those with her blood in their veins: D. Pedro Gastão, her son, was married to the aunt of the King of Spain; the current Count of Paris, Dom Duarte Nuno of Portugal and the Duchess Consort of Württemberg are her grandchildren, and Alexander, Crown Prince of Yugoslavia, is her great-grandson. In the mausoleum of the Petropolis Cathedral, alongside Emperor Dom Pedro II, Empress Dona Teresa Cristina, Princess Isabel and Count d'Eu, there are only two other persons that have the honor of resting there: Dom Pedro Gastão and Elisabeth Countess Dobrzensky. Based on this evidence - even though the republic forbid the continuance of the monarchy in Brazil - it can be said that, in principle (de jure) Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz was 'Empress of Brazil'.

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***Astrid Bodstein**, an historian and genealogist, performed the iconographic research.*

Original title in Portuguese:
Elisabeth Dobrzensky von Dobrzenicz, "Imperatriz do Brazil".

English translation by ***Colin Foulkes***

Notes

1. Chapter III, article 105, of the Imperial Constitution of Brazil, states: *The Heir Apparent of the Empire shall have the title of 'Prince Imperial' and his first born son of 'Prince of Grão Pará', the other children to be titled 'Princes'. The address of the Heir Apparent shall be 'Your Imperial Highness' and the same will apply to the Prince of Grão Pará: the other Princes shall be addressed as Your Highness*.
2. Orléans e Bragança: "Centenary of the Prince of Grão Pará", *Review of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, Rio de Janeiro*: National Press Department, 1978. Volume 316, July-September 1977, p 369
3. Countess of Paris, Isabel de Orléans e Bragança: Interview. Unpublished text in French, private record of Victor Villon.
4. The Countess of Barcelona, mother of King Juan Carlos of Spain, also recognized the artistic talents of Countess Dobrzensky : *We had many relations in Paris. The one we met the most was Uncle Pedro de Orléans e Bragança, who was the son of an Orléans, the Count d'Eu and Isabel de Bragança, who was the heir to the throne of Brazil. He was married to a Czech lady, Countess Elisabeth Dobrzensky, Aunt Elsi, who was an artist. She played the piano very well and was a wonderful painter. They lived in a magnificent house in the Bois de Boulogne and had five children*. . . Gonzalez de Vega, Javier : *Yo, Maria de Borbon*. El Pafs Aguilar, p 47
5. Monjouvent, Philippe de: *Le Comte de Paris Duc de France et ses ancetres*. Charenton, Editions du Chaney, 2000.
6. Orléans e Bragança: "Centenary of the Prince of Grão Pará", *Review of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, Rio de Janeiro*: National Press Department, 1978. Volume 316, Jul-Sep 1977, p 369
7. Barman, Roderick J., *Princess Isabel of Brazil: gender and power in the XIX century*. Sao Paulo: published by Unesp, 2002, p 300
8. Lacombe, Lourenco Luiz: *Isabel the Princess Redeemer*, [s.d.] pp 275, 276
9. Correa de Oliveira, João Alfredo: *Cartas do Conselheiro João Alfredo à Princesa Isabel in Revista do Institute Historico e Geográfico Brasileiro. Transcrição e notas de Pedro Moniz de Aragao*. Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, 1964. Volume 230, julho-setembro, 1963. p 374
10. "Dispute of Princes" : *Diario da Noite*, 27 January 1936, year VIII, number 2529. Taken from periodicals in the National Library. Microfilm: PR-SPR397 Diario da Noite-2 January/29 February
11. Countess of Paris, Isabel de Orléans e Bragança: Interview. Unpublished text in French, private record of Victor Villon.
12. Eu, 09/03/1909.
13. Graz, 18/09/1909.
14. Chotebor, 25/09/1909.
15. Krasne, 03/10/1909.
16. Eu, 16/02/1911.
17. Krasne,03/10/1909.
18. Kjøbenhavn (Copenhagen), 17/10/1910. 19. Ditto
20. The handwriting is not perfectly legible
21. Balansó Juan: *La familia Real y La familia irreal*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1992. p.192